



Meeting 2007 October 01

COUNCIL REPORT

**COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE**

*HIS WORSHIP, THE MAYOR  
AND COUNCILLORS*

**SUBJECT: 204 ALPHA AND 205 BETA - RESPONSE TO DELEGATION REQUEST**

**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

1. THAT the Mayor, on behalf of Council, send a letter to Shayne Ramsay, Chief Executive Officer, B.C. Housing requesting that B.C. Housing:
  - establish a Neighbourhood Liaison Committee to discuss pertinent issues concerning the housing development at 204 Alpha and 205 Beta, as discussed in Section 3.1 of this report;
  - provide written confirmation that, over the longer term, the subject development will continue to be maintained as housing for low income families; and
  - provide written confirmation that the City of Burnaby and the Neighbourhood Liaison Committee will be consulted if plans are being considered for inclusion of on-site support services in the development.
2. THAT a copy of this report be sent to:
  - Honourable Rich Coleman, Minister Responsible for Housing, Province of B.C.
  - Mr. Peter Cech, Confederation Park Concerned Citizens Association.

**REPORT**

The Community Development Committee, at its meeting held on 2007 September 18, received and adopted the attached report responding to a delegation request for Council support on two matters relating to the B.C. Housing purchase of rental buildings at 204 Alpha and 205 Beta Avenue.

Respectfully submitted,

Councillor C. Jordan  
Chair

Councillor D. Johnston  
Vice Chair

Councillor G. Evans  
Member

Copied to:	City Manager Director Planning & Building
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**TO:** CHAIR AND MEMBERS  
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

**DATE:** 2007 September 13

**FROM:** DIRECTOR PLANNING & BUILDING

**FILE:** 49500 10  
*Reference: Affordable Housing*

**SUBJECT:** 204 ALPHA AND 205 BETA - RESPONSE TO DELEGATION REQUEST

**PURPOSE:** To respond to a delegation request for Council support on two matters relating to the B.C. Housing purchase of rental buildings at 204 Alpha and 205 Beta Avenue.

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**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

1. **THAT** the Committee recommend that the Mayor, on behalf of Council, send a letter to Shayne Ramsay, Chief Executive Officer, B.C. Housing requesting that B.C. Housing:
  - establish a Neighbourhood Liaison Committee to discuss pertinent issues concerning the housing development at 204 Alpha and 205 Beta, as discussed in Section 3.1 of this report;
  - provide written confirmation that, over the longer term, the subject development will continue to be maintained as housing for low income families; and
  - provide written confirmation that the City of Burnaby and the Neighbourhood Liaison Committee will be consulted if plans are being considered for inclusion of on-site support services in the development.
2. **THAT** a copy of this report be sent to:
  - Honourable Rich Coleman, Minister Responsible for Housing, Province of B.C.
  - Mr. Peter Cech, Confederation Park Concerned Citizens Association.

**REPORT****1.0 BACKGROUND**

The Community Development Committee, at its meeting held on 2007 June 26, heard from a delegation of residents concerned about the future use of the townhouse properties located at 204 Alpha and 205 Beta Avenue which were purchased by B.C. Housing in April 2007 under the Provincial Homelessness Initiative (PHI). The residents sought the City's support in requesting B.C. Housing to transfer the properties from the PHI portfolio to ensure that the units would be used for independent, low income family housing. They also requested that the City urge B.C. Housing to establish a neighbourhood liaison committee to ensure on-going dialogue in regard to the use of the properties.

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Arising from discussion, the Committee referred the delegation's proposals to staff for assessment. This report responds to the Committee's request.

## 2.0 PURCHASE OF THE PROPERTIES AND NEIGHBOURHOOD CONCERNS

B.C. Housing purchased two townhouse buildings located at 204 Alpha and 205 Beta Avenue in April 2007 (*see Attachment #1*). The two buildings were constructed in 1959 and include a total of 38 two-bedroom townhouses. They are located to the south of Confederation Park. The initial press release for the acquisition stated that the buildings would be converted into supportive housing. It also noted that the buildings were purchased under the PHI program which seeks to assist individuals and families who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. According to the release, potential tenants for PHI projects could include people with mental illnesses and physical disabilities, those with drug and alcohol addictions, aboriginal peoples, youth, and women with children fleeing abusive relationships.

Local residents organized public meetings on 2007 April 20 and May 24 to discuss their concerns regarding the purchase. The first meeting was held at McGill Library with over 300 people in attendance. The second meeting was held at Alpha Secondary School with over 200 people in attendance.

Key concerns identified by area residents at the meetings included:

- Lack of communication with the surrounding neighbourhood on the purchase and proposed use of the buildings
- Uncertainty about the status of existing tenants in the buildings
- Lack of information about the residents who would be moved into the buildings and the type and adequacy of support services they would require
- Appropriateness of converting the buildings for supportive housing purposes
- Compatibility of the proposed housing with the existing neighbourhood.

At the meetings, B.C. Housing staff clarified that that the properties would not be used to house homeless people with drug addictions but would be provided to families in need of support services. Minister Rich Coleman also confirmed in an open letter to residents that the units will be retained for family housing. B.C. Housing staff also advised that current tenants will be permitted to stay and the existing property management company will continue to manage the buildings. B.C. Housing intends to prepare an operations plan for the properties which would include future management by a non-profit agency.

## 3.0 DISCUSSION OF DELEGATION'S REQUESTS

As noted, the 2007 June 26 delegation to the Committee asked for the City's support in requesting B.C. Housing to:

- establish a neighbourhood liaison committee to ensure ongoing dialogue in regard to the use of the properties; and
- transfer 204 Alpha and 205 Beta Avenue from the Provincial Homelessness Initiative program to another B.C. Housing program targeting low income families.

A discussion of these requests is provided below.

### 3.1 Establishment of a Neighbourhood Liaison Committee

#### *Delegation Request:*

The purpose of the proposed neighbourhood liaison committee would be to provide an opportunity for ongoing dialogue between the neighbourhood and B.C. Housing regarding the use of the properties. The delegation proposed that the committee also have a role in reviewing the management plan and applicants for housing. It suggested that the committee include two residents of the townhouses and one representative each from the non-profit housing agency managing the properties, B.C. Housing, City of Burnaby, Block Watch and the Confederation Park Elementary School Parent Advisory Committee.

#### *Staff Comments:*

It is believed that a neighbourhood liaison committee could play a useful role in:

- Serving as a forum for communication and consultation
- Developing “Good Neighbour” protocols
- Providing feedback and making general recommendations about housing operations
- Reviewing issues and complaints regarding housing operations
- Organizing activities to provide opportunities for improved integration of the housing into the neighbourhood.

Similar types of committees have been established in other communities. For example, a temporary neighbourhood liaison committee was created during the planning and development of Hyland House, an emergency shelter, transitional and permanent housing project in Surrey. The committee, which was in place for two years, met periodically to discuss operations of the project.

In Vancouver, a neighbourhood advisory committee was established for a supportive housing project for homeless people with mental illness and addictions located at Fraser Street and E. 39<sup>th</sup> Avenue. Also, the City of Vancouver Supportive Housing Strategy, adopted by Vancouver Council in June 2007, refers to the use of neighbourhood advisory committees as one mechanism to address neighbourhood concerns.

It is noted that both the Surrey and Vancouver committees were not involved in management of the housing or selection of tenants. While staff would defer to B.C. Housing on these aspects, in general, it may be problematic, from a privacy and operational perspective, for such a committee to screen tenants or to become involved in day to day management issues for the housing.

Given the merits, however, of involving and communicating with local residents on an ongoing basis, staff are supportive of requesting B.C. Housing to establish a neighbourhood liaison committee for the Alpha Beta properties. It is not considered necessary or appropriate for a City staff person to serve on the committee; however, staff would be available as a resource and could be called upon on an as-required basis.

### **3.2 Transfer of Properties to Different B.C. Housing Program Portfolio**

#### *Delegation Request:*

The delegation's request that the properties be transferred from the PHI program appeared to be based on two key concerns:

- Inappropriate Location – It was noted that the Alpha and Beta site is located adjacent to a park, library, elementary school and single and two family housing, which would render it unsuitable for many of the people targeted for the PHI program – particularly unattached individuals with high support needs; and
- Inappropriate Housing Form – It was noted that the townhouse units are currently designed for and provide housing for low income families and are not suited for typical homeless or at risk of homelessness populations.

#### *Staff Comments:*

Irrespective of the B.C. Housing program under which the units are included, it is noted that the buildings are located in a primarily low density single and two family residential neighbourhood, near public amenities and the Hastings Street shops and services which would render the housing desirable for family residents. It is further noted that the buildings consist of two bedroom units which makes them most appropriate for families.

It is acknowledged that B.C. Housing staff and Minister Rich Coleman have stated that the Alpha Beta buildings will not be targeted to people with drug and alcohol addictions and that the intention is to use the housing for families needing support (e.g. victims of domestic abuse).

In response to the delegation's request, it is proposed that Council seek written confirmation from B.C. Housing that, over the longer term, the properties will continue to be maintained as housing for low income families. While acknowledging that it may be desirable to provide some on-site support services for residents at some future date, it is also proposed to seek written confirmation from B.C. Housing that the City of Burnaby and the Neighbourhood Liaison Committee would be consulted on such a proposal. It is noted that a rezoning may be required depending on the scope of support services to be offered on site.

## **4.0 CONCLUSION**

This report presents the delegation's request relating to the future use of 204 Alpha and 205 Beta Avenue that:

- B.C. Housing establish a neighbourhood liaison committee, which would include local residents, to ensure on-going dialogue about the use of the properties; and
- B.C. Housing transfer 204 Alpha and 205 Beta Avenue from the Provincial Homelessness Initiative program portfolio into another B.C. Housing program targeting independent low income families.

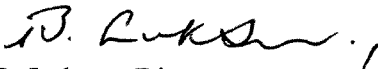
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With regards to the establishment of a neighbourhood liaison committee, it is noted that the approach has been pursued in Surrey and Vancouver and could be an appropriate avenue to address ongoing residential and neighbourhood issues concerning the Alpha Beta properties. With regards to the transfer of the units to another B.C. Housing program, it is believed that the key concern is with ensuring that the units be maintained as housing for low income families, regardless of the program portfolio under which the units are maintained.

It is thus recommended that the Mayor, on behalf of Council, be requested to send a letter to Shayne Ramsay, Chief Executive Officer, B.C. Housing requesting that B.C. Housing:

- establish a Neighbourhood Liaison Committee for the Alpha Beta properties, as discussed in Section 3.1 of this report;
- provide written confirmation that, over the longer term, the subject properties will continue to be maintained as housing for low income families; and
- provide written confirmation that the City and the Neighbourhood Liaison Committee will be consulted if plans are being considered for inclusion of on-site support services in the development.

It is also recommended that a copy of this report be sent to the Honourable Rich Coleman (Minister Responsible for Housing – Province of B.C.) and Mr. Peter Cech (delegation representative of the Confederation Park Concerned Citizens Association).



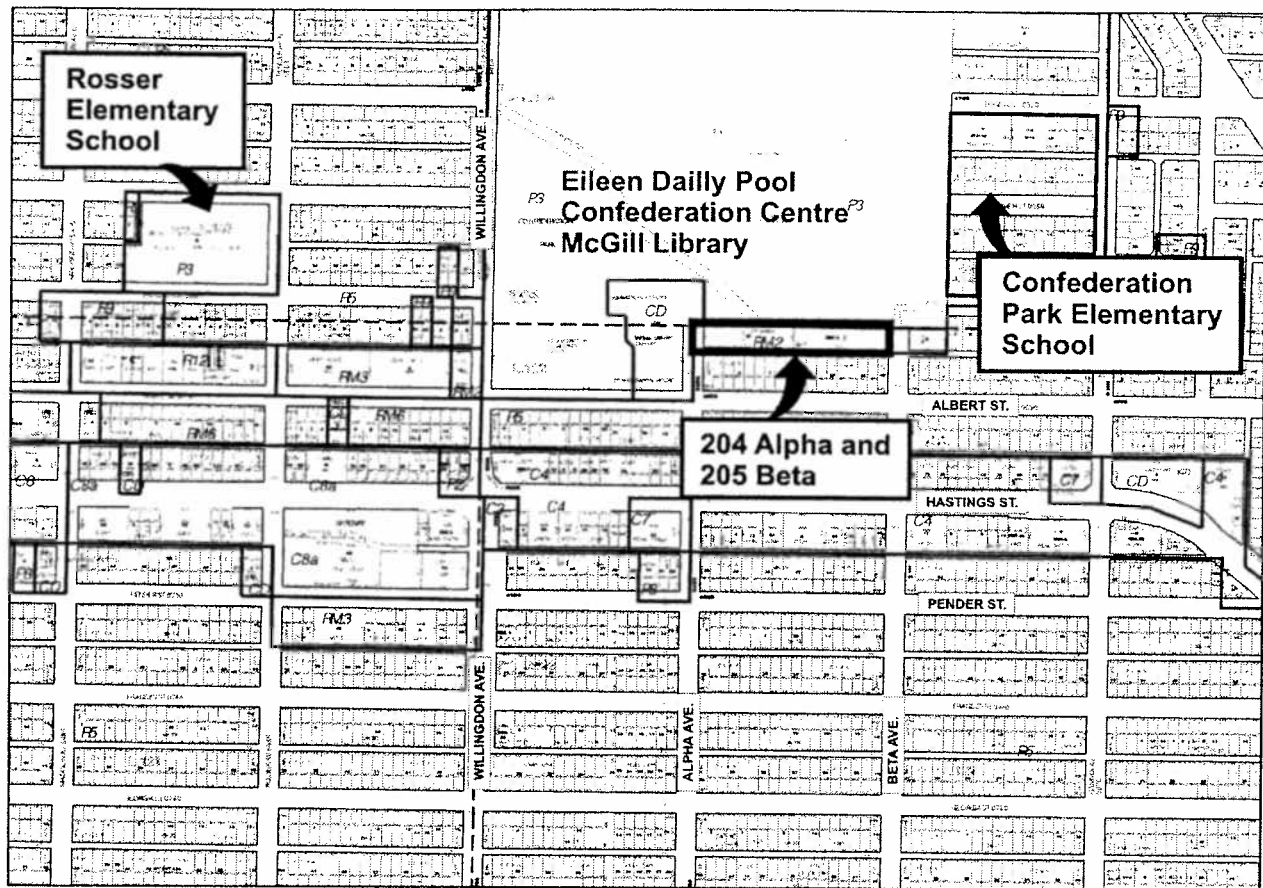
B. Luksun, Director  
PLANNING & BUILDING



SF/sla  
Attachment

Copied to: City Manager

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# Attachment 1 – Site Map



Date:	July 07	 <p>City of Burnaby Planning &amp; Building Dept.</p> <p><b>204 Alpha and 205 Beta</b></p>	
Scale:	NTS		
Drawn By:	DWD		